



HEALTH ADVISORY #58

Novel Influenza H3N2 variant virus [(H3N2)v] in Mineral County, West Virginia

TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Local Health Departments, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities

FROM: Marian L. Swinker, MD, MPH, Commissioner for Public Health and State Health Officer, WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health

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LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

Two children attending the same daycare have been diagnosed with a novel influenza A H3N2 variant [(H3N2)v] virus with the matrix (M) gene from the influenza A(H1N1) pdm09 virus in the Mineral County area. The illness onset dates were November 19th and November 29th, 2011. Both children have recovered completely without antiviral therapy. No recent travel or exposure to swine was reported from either patient. However, respiratory illness was identified in multiple contacts. Investigation is ongoing.

This influenza A (H3N2)v virus is similar to viruses (formerly known as swine-origin triple reassortant H3N2 influenza viruses) that have caused 10 previous cases of novel influenza A infection in the United States since August 2011. These novel influenza A (H3N2) viruses are substantially different from currently circulating seasonal (human) influenza A (H3N2) viruses, but are distantly related to human influenza viruses that circulated among people in the 1990s. For that reason, some adults may have some residual immunity against this virus. However, children younger than 6 years have no immunity to this virus, rendering this age group the most vulnerable for infection.

We are requesting your assistance to identify outbreaks or clusters of upper respiratory infections among children 5 year old or younger, especially in daycares and kindergartens. Upper respiratory symptoms may include fever, sore throat, cough, nasal congestion, or shortness of breath. Nasal or throat swabs for PCR testing are appropriate specimens from young children because of the large amount of virus they shed. In West Virginia, outbreaks are required to be reported immediately to the local health department. Please contact (800)-423-1271 or your local health department for questions.

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